



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PO Box 47852 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7852

December 19, 2005

TO: Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Chapter 246-320 WAC – Hospital Licensing Regulations

FROM: Gary Bennett, Director, Facilities and Services Licensing

The department has opened the Hospital Licensing Regulations. This rule project will provide opportunities for: simplifying language to increase clarity; updates reflecting 2005 legislative changes; and providing open public options for receiving proposals and comments in order to develop recommendations to the department for changes to the existing regulations.

Additionally, the department will:

- Develop rules using, “plain talk principles”, to ensure clear and understandable standards (Reference - www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/plaintalk).
- Complete a review and update of the hospital rules, which have not been reviewed since 1998.
- Amend rules to reflect and address changes required by 2005 Legislation which include HB 1533 - Inspection of Hospitals, SSB 5065 – Injuries resulting from health care and SSB 5492 – Hospital reporting of restrictions on health care practitioners (to view bill text reference: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo>).
- Consider standardizing and/or aligning hospital construction requirements with nationally recognized construction standards developed by the Facilities Guidelines Institute with assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Consider adopting the twenty-seven reportable events developed by the National Quality Forum. If adopted, the reportable events would replace the current definition and hospital reporting requirements concerning “adverse events.” The department would collect, analyze and distribute reportable event information in effort to improve health care services, public/patient safety, reduce malpractice costs and prevent similar events from occurring in other various health care settings.
- Consider modifying the rules and/or standards for nurse staffing around nurse to patient ratios.

Rule Drafting Process

The rule drafting and revision process will follow a well-documented process with clear timeframes (see timeline sheet enclosed). Following this process provides an effective level of consistency and participation. The *rule drafting process* is comprised of two basic steps:

Continued on page 2

Step 1 - Proposals

The department will distribute the current rule, highlight subject areas identified for possible change and open a proposal period. A proposal may be made by anyone. The department will strongly encourage proposals be in writing and include justification (rationale) and contact information.

Following the time frame for making proposals, the department will hold a public meeting to consider all proposals that have been received. The department then will publish a report capturing the recommendations from the meeting, referred to as the “Report on Proposals” (ROP). The ROP is made available to the public. If a proposal is revised or rejected there must be a reason reported for the change or rejection.

Step 2 - Comments

Once the ROP is made available, the department will open a comment period during which the public may submit written comments on the changes proposed in the ROP. Comments may be made by anyone, must be in writing, and include justification and contact information. The department will then convene a second public meeting. This meeting will be conducted as above, addressing all comments received.

The department will then compile all comments into a second publication called the Report on Comments (ROC), which is also made available to anyone for review.

The purpose of the ROP and ROC is to develop and document the public recommendations to the department for changes to the existing rule. Based on a review of the ROP & ROC (recommendations and comments) the department will draft a proposed rule. The basic flow for drafting rules utilizing the above approach is attached. Following the rule drafting process, the department will proceed with filing a CR-102 (formal notice of rule making) and announce a public hearing date to consider the proposed rules.

Parties interested in monitoring the project status or to obtaining copies of the proposed rules and public proposal forms, please log onto www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/fsl/ruledevelop.

For questions regarding this process, contact Allen Spaulding at (360) 236-2929 or e-mail at al.spaulding@doh.wa.gov

Thank you in advance for your interest and participation and we look forward to working with interested parties concerning these important rules.

Sincerely,

Gary Bennett, Director
Facilities & Services Licensing

Enclosures